

**STUDENT,
CLASSROOM, AND
WHOLE SCHOOL
DISCIPLINE**

INDEPENDENT STUDY

A FIVE CREDIT CLASS

Course # ED419g/519g

INSTRUCTOR:

DR. MICHAEL SEDLER

Email: mike@communicationplus.net

(509) 443-1605

THE HERITAGE INSTITUTE

Please use the checklist/syllabus in the manual.

PLEASE SEND ASSIGNMENTS ELECTRONICALLY (AS AN ATTACHMENT). It is best to send in no more than 2 to 3 assignments at a time and I will send you back comments. Send them in numerical order (#1, #2, #3...). You may send work in Microsoft Word, in a Google Doc (but give permission for review), zip folder, a converted Pages file, etc.

Thank you for signing up for my independent study classes. You may take up to six months to complete this course, and may obtain an additional 3 month extension. DO NOT send in any completed papers unless you have registered for the class! If working in a group, put all names on each paper, except the integration paper which must be individually authored. See ** at bottom of page.

The checklist in the manual is to help you plan your schedule to successfully complete this course. The last page of the manual include a General Bibliography with phone numbers of publishing companies. If you prefer, you may choose an alternate book not on the suggested list.

On the following page, I have given you a brief biography/resume of my background. You will see that I have a Masters Degree in Social Work; my K-8 Teaching Certification and am a Licensed Social Worker with the State of Washington. My current primary role is as a consultant and trainer for schools, businesses and agencies. I also worked in education for 15 years as a Director of Special Education, a Behavior Intervention Specialist, School Social Worker, and Teacher.

I teach classes and seminars throughout the United States and in Canada. I am adjunct professor through two Universities in Washington. I am available for on-site training, classes, and in services for agencies and schools. I anticipate this class will be enjoyable and full of learning. Please contact me if you would like me to be involved directly with your school or business.

Thank you, once again, for signing up for it and I look forward to working with you over the next weeks/months. If you would like individual feedback on assignments, please indicate this when turning in your work

Sincerely,

Michael Sedler
(509) 443-1605
E-mail: mike@communicationplus.net
Website: www.michaelsedler.com
P.O. BOX 30310 - Spokane, WA. - 99223

** For those working in groups (400/500 level only!)- be sure to go to The Heritage Institute website at www.hol.edu and click on the "group collaboration" icon.

1. Each group member must pick a book to read (you may all choose the same book).
2. Each group member must read the entire manual.
3. Final evaluation/integration paper must be individually authored.

Please share about my classes with others. It is my main form of advertising. 😊

MICHAEL SEDLER

(509) 443-1605 (w); (509) 939-6302 (c)

email: mike@communicationplus.net or michael@michaelsedler.com

website: www.michaelsedler.com

Education

B.A., Political Science

Master Degree, Social Work

Master Degree, Divinity

Doctorate Degree, Ministry

Teaching Certificate

Work Experience

Consultant/Trainer/Counselor

Director of Special Education

Developmental Disabilities Administration, behavior consultant

Supervisor, Educational Services

School Social Worker (K-12)

Behavior Intervention Specialist (K -12)

Classroom Teacher (elementary and middle school)

Assistant Pastor

Other Experiences

State Correctional Facility for Juveniles, Counselor and Supervisor

Community Mental Health Therapist

State Trainer in Autism (State of Washington)

Adjunct Professor for several Universities

Student Teacher Supervisor

Consultant for schools, business, churches throughout United States

Provide weekend marriage retreats

Interview and Speech Coach/Trainer for Miss Arizona, 3rd runner-up Miss America 2012

Author

When to Speak Up and When To Shut Up. (Jan., 2006 Revell Books, \$5.99). Book from faith-based perspective.

Communication book discussing conflict, power struggles, listening strategies, asking questions.

(Over 300,000 copies sold).

What To Do When Words Get Ugly. (October, 2016, Revell Books, \$5.99). Updated/edited version of "Stop The Runaway Conversation.")

Two new chapters in addition to edits. Book from faith-based perspective.

Importance of not listening to negative discussions and how they impact a person's attitude.

Books are available through all bookstores, at www.bakerbooks.com, by calling 800 877 2665, or by checking with various online book companies. Revell is a division of Baker Publishing Group. Both books are available on CD as audio books.

INDEPENDENT STUDY COLLEGE COURSES

THE HERITAGE INSTITUTE (credits through Antioch University, Seattle, WA)

MICHAEL SEDLER, INSTRUCTOR

Register for courses anytime. (6-month period for completion from the date you register). **Collaborate with fellow educators-only one set of assignments turned into instructor.** (Check out "Group Collaboration Guidelines" at www.hol.edu). **Clock hours available for partial course completion.

The following are **3 CREDIT CLASSES** (3 quarter credits = 2 semester credits)

1. Increasing Motivation and Self-Esteem in Students (SS401p/SS501p)

Strategies to help students feel confident and help educators find more successful approaches with them.

2. Parents: Adversary or Ally--A Cooperative Approach (SS401q/SS501q)

Specific ideas on connecting with parents and helping better communication between school and home.

3. Social Skills: A Foundation For Learning (SS401v/SS501v)

Activities and ideas to encourage students to improve their peer and social relations.

4. Understanding & Connecting With Aggressive Students (ED404d/ED504d)

Each person will increase their understanding of ways to de-escalate aggression and its' causes.

3 CREDIT COST: \$280-400/500 level; \$195-clock hours (3 quarter = 2 semester)

The following are **5 CREDIT CLASSES:** (5 quarter credits -3.3 semester credits)

1. Bullying Behaviors: Enough is Enough (ED437q/ED537q)

Identification and interventions to reduce bullying behaviors and victim mentality within schools and community.

2. Counseling Skills For Educators (ED409r/ED509r)

Helpful ideas on listening skills, asking questions, and communicating with students.

3. Gang Attitudes And Actions (SS406k/SS506k)

This class will help each person to identify gangs and intervention strategies for your community/school.

4. High Maintenance Behaviors & Interactions (SS409f/SS509f)

This course investigates the many aspects of high needs people, behaviors and effective interactions.

5. Mental Health Issues and Students (HE402n/HE502n)

Understand various disorders (oppositional defiant, obsessive compulsive, bi-polar) and interventions.

6. Nurturing Compassion Within Our Schools (ED434y/ED534y)

Ideas to help adults and children learn to be more sensitive, kind, and compassionate toward one another.

7. Organizational Teaching Skills (ED429w/ED529w)

Increase your own organizational and time management skills as well as helping students in these areas.

8. School Violence (SS406m/SS506m)

Each person will learn indicators and interventions for potential violent situations.

9. Stress Reduction in Staff and Students (HE401m/HE501m)

Strategies to reduce stress, become more effective in life, and teach these skills to students.

10. Student, Classroom and Whole-School Discipline (ED419g/ED519g)

Focus is on negative talk, gossip and rumors within schools. Behavioral strategies for each above area.

11. Youth Suicide (SS404u/SS504u)

Specific discussions on signs and interventions for suicide prevention.

5- CREDIT COST: \$415-400/500 LEVEL; \$315-clock hours (5 quarter = 3.3 semester)

NEXT PAGE FOR MORE CLASSES AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION

INDEPENDENT STUDY COLLEGE COURSES

THE HERITAGE INSTITUTE (credits through Antioch University, Seattle, WA)

MICHAEL SEDLER, INSTRUCTOR

The following are **6 CREDIT CLASSES**: (6 quarter credits - 4 semester credits)

1. Autism: Questions and Answers (ED445y/ED545y)

Understanding the general areas of autism, diagnosis, and overall strategies for interventions for children with special needs.

2. Establishing Rules and Boundaries (ED445x/ED545x)

Ideas to assist educators in setting up a successful work environment for children (rules, procedures, teaching tools).

3. Inspirational Education (ED452f/ED552f)

This course will re-charge the batteries and create a new excitement about teaching in each person.

4. The Impact Of Trauma and Loss in Students (ED464z/ED564z)

Strategies to support children who have experienced traumatic situations in life.

5. Why Children Act Out (ED458t/ED558t)

Recognize the underlying function of behaviors and interventions approaches.

6- CREDIT COST: \$495--400/500 LEVEL; \$380-clock hours (6 quarter = 4 semester)

REGISTRATION: Call The Heritage Institute--1 (800) 445-1305; 1 (360) 341-3020

Or register on line at www.hol.edu

QUESTIONS: Please call Michael Sedler at (509) 443-1605. Leave message when necessary.

Email address: mike@communicationplus.net Website: www.michaelsedler.com

**For clock hours, only complete the first section of the course. Remember, clock hours may not transfer to other districts or states. You cannot go back and acquire credit once clock hours have been earned for a class.

COURSE TITLE: STUDENT, CLASSROOM, WHOLE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE
NO. OF CREDITS: 5 QUARTER CREDITS WA CLOCK HRS: 50
[semester equivalent = 3.33 credits] OREGON PDUs: 50
CEUs: 5.0
INSTRUCTOR: MIKE SEDLER, D. Min, M.S.W. (equals 50 hrs.)
Box 30310
Spokane, WA 99223
509/443-1605
mike@communicationplus.net

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

The assignment checklist will help you plan your schedule of work for this course. Check off items completed so that you can better monitor your progress. While you have six-months to complete your work, many will find a shorter time period convenient. **Please email no more than 2 to 3 assignments at a time for comments. Do NOT send further work until you receive comments from the instructor. Grades will be submitted once all assignments and the integration paper have been sent to instructor.**

If involved in a group, all work should be sent through the Group Leader.

For Washington Clock Hours, Oregon Professional Development Units, or Continuing Education Credits, please complete the first 8 assignments.

__ Assignment #1:

Read a book from the bibliography or one of student's choice. If taking this course in a group, each person should read a book. Only one person needs to write a 2 page summary.

Critique the book based on personal experiences. Write a 2-3 page paper. **(send to instructor)**

__ Assignment #2:

Read all materials in the manual sent by instructor.

__ Assignment #3:

Read enclosed case studies found on page 18 in manual, choose one, and answer questions at end. **(send to instructor)**

__ Assignment #4:

Complete all required pages and worksheets within the manual.

__ Assignment #5:

Observe another classroom noting specific strategies used by the teacher to minimize negative conversations among students. List potential intervention strategies to help minimize or neutralize these types of comments in your learning environment. **(send to instructor)**

__ Assignment #6:

Interview a student regarding the conflict resolution questionnaire (page 19 in manual) or have an entire class fill out the questionnaire. After having a student or classroom fill out the conflict resolution questionnaire, write a 1-2 page summary of this assignment noting impressions and observations. **(send to instructor)**

__ Assignment #7:

Share the concept of minimizing gossip and tattling with a class, student, or other selected individual(s). Have them observe selected settings and notice the amount of gossip taking place. Choose a time of the day or week to practice a "no gossip" time frame. Discuss the results with the class or individual(s).

__ Assignment #8:

Observe at least two non-classroom settings (cafeteria, hallway, bus area, outside in the community, etc.) and compare it to the "safety net" environment discussed in this course. Summarize your observations in a 1-2 page paper. **(send to instructor)**

This completes the assignments required for Washington Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, or CEUs.

Continue to the next section for additional assignments required for University Quarter Credit

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED for 400 or 500 LEVEL UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

In this section you will have an opportunity to apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you are not teaching in a classroom, please contact the instructor for course modifications. If you start or need to complete this course during the summer, please try to apply your ideas when possible with youth from your neighborhood, at a local public library or parks department facility, (they will often be glad to sponsor community-based learning), with students in another teacher's summer classroom in session, students from past years, or use one of your own children or other relative.

___ Assignment #9: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

Develop a classroom-wide "safety net" for a classroom (see sample in manual, p. 28). Included should be classroom rules, rewards, consequences and parental contacts. Write a 2 page summary. **(send to instructor)**

___ Assignment #10: You must choose either "A" or "B" (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

Assignment #A: (SEND commentary to Instructor)

- Develop a lesson to reflect what you've learned in this course.
- Implement your lesson with students in your classroom.
- Write a 2 page commentary on what worked well and what could be improved.
- Include any student feedback on your lesson.

(The following is encouraged but not required):

- Share what you've learned with other teachers taking our courses by also contributing your Lesson to The Heritage Institute Lesson Library located at <http://www.hol.edu/lesson-plan-library>

OR

Assignment #B: (SEND lesson and summary to Instructor)

Use this option if you do not have a classroom available.

- Develop a lesson to reflect what you've learned in this course. (Do not implement it.)
- Write a 2 page summary concerning any noteworthy success you've had as a teacher with one or more students.

(The following is encouraged but not required):

- Please refer to the guidelines on our blog <http://www.hol.edu/blog> prior to writing your article.
- Please email a copy to [Rebecca Blankinship \(rebecca@hol.edu\)](mailto:rebecca@hol.edu) THI blog curator and media specialist.
- Indicate whether or not you are OK with having your article considered for publishing on our website.
- Subject line to read: (Course Name, Blog)

Send to instructor: mike@communicationplus.net

500 LEVEL ASSIGNMENT

___ Assignment #11: (500 Level only)

In addition to the 400 level assignments, complete **one (1)** of the following assignment options:
Option A) Mentor one other teacher in the methods and information from this class. Write up the results. **(Send to instructor):** 2-3 pages.

OR

Option B) Another assignment of your own design, with the instructor's prior approval.

400 & 500 LEVEL ASSIGNMENT

__ Assignment #12: (Required for 400 and 500 Level Credit)

Write a 2-3 page Integration Paper answering these specific questions:

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
4. How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned? **(send to instructor)**

Must be individually authored (name and course title) for those taking in a group.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:

QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:

Mike Sedler, M.S.W., brings over 30 year of educational experience as an administrator, social worker, behavior specialist and teacher to each of his classes. He provides consultation and seminars throughout the United States and Canada for schools, agencies and businesses. He has a graduate degree in Social Work, a Doctoral degree in Ministry, a Counseling license, as well as his teaching certification. All of Mike's classes are practical and "field tested" in schools and classrooms. Educators have found success in implementing Mike's clear and concise approaches. All of his course material may be immediately implemented into a school or a home.

NOTES: You may work collaboratively and submit joint assignments on all but the Integration Paper portion (and other designated assignments) which must be individually authored and submitted. Alternatives to written assignments such as a video, audio tape, photo collage, etc. are permissible with prior approval of instructor. **If you do not receive a confirmation email back after sending your paperwork via email, please re-send or contact the instructor to confirm it has been received. It seems that occasionally things get lost in cyber-space. Thank you.**

Full credit will be given to each student as long as all work is turned in. If something is missing, I will be in contact with you. Failure is not an option. 😊

This class is separated into three sections: The Student, The Classroom, and The Whole School. While each section is in an individual category, the strategies discussed may be integrated throughout the course.

The Student: The topic of gossip and tattling is discussed with numerous ideas to minimize this troublesome issue. This will also include communication ideas as well as strategies to reduce conflict.

The Classroom: In this section, we continue to explore the way students talk to one another and how it impacts the classroom. Problem solving strategies are presented along with understanding rewards, consequences, and punishment.

There is also an article on the subject of active listening.

The School: From bullies, to victims, to developing school-wide discipline plans, this section will help each person to develop effective plans for children.

Enjoy the class.

THE STUDENT

(Or anyone else that fits the profiles we discuss)

WHAT STUDENTS REALLY NEED!

"It is the province of knowledge to speak, and it is the privilege of wisdom to listen." (Oliver Wendall Holmes)

1. An Attentive Ear-

One way communication is an educator's chief failing. We know things, they don't. Time is short, so we talk. Give feedback on comments from students. Interact with them.

2. Inspiration-

The culture of today breeds cynicism, We must find a way to excite and inspire students. Madeline Sophie Barat (19th century educator) wrote, "the young are built for heroism, not pleasure." Motivating them is good ... inspiring is better.

3. Love-

Every child must know that at least one person is "crazy" about them. "Children need love especially when they don't deserve it" (Harold Hubert).

4. Structure-

Educators do a good job in this area. Unfortunately, we forget to add in the other areas with structure.

5. Friendship-

Children need friends and interaction. Do we teach "friendship" skills or just let children discover this on their own?

6. Honesty-

Don't try to fool the child. Be honest, but kind in your assessments. Our truthfulness and honesty should inspire them.

THE GIFT OF GOSSIP???

NOTE: *The topic of gossip and rumors has made such an impression on my life that I wrote a book about it. "What To Do When Words Get Ugly" examines gossip, criticism and negative comments and the impact it has on the listener of such words (See Bibliography List In Back Of Manual). The book is presented from a Christian perspective, utilizing biblical examples, stories from my time as an educator, personal examples, and helping people to see the moral significance in hurting others with words. I have been fortunate enough to speak around the country on this topic, being interviewed by dozens of radio and television stations. I have concluded that regardless of one's personal faith convictions, gossip and slander should be seen as dangerous and injurious.*

Most people have a specific mind-set about gossip and tattling. Often we view these people as ones who spread rumors or share secrets. Naturally, "these people" are not us ☺!! When thinking of this type of person you may envision an elderly person speaking condescendingly about "the younger generation." You may think of a colleague who speaks negatively about other co-workers or the boss. You might think of a group of teenagers (boys or girls) who whisper with vicious intent about their fellow students. Don't limit your thoughts or impressions to one gender, age group or situation.

There are many different traits of those who fall into the trap of gossip and criticism. Let's look at a few of these and give specific definitions to them.

1. **TALKATIVE:** These people talk and talk and talk. They love to share the latest news, what happened in the teacher's lounge, who did what, when and how.
2. **NEGATIVE:** If one didn't know better, you would think this person is looking for bad things in a person's life. They seem to dig up more dirt than an archeologist.
3. **VICIOUS:** Some people enjoy seeing others hurt and in pain. They attack like a raptor and continue to cut away with words until one is left decimated. When confronted about their sarcasm, the comment "I was only kidding" is often heard.
4. **SELF-RIGHTEOUS:** They think they are doing society a favor by sharing negative information. The gossip is infuriated if someone says negative things about them.
5. **GOOD COMMUNICATORS:** This person is usually very verbal and has a good grasp of communication techniques. They can spin a good story and sound very convincing.

SEND TO INSTRUCTOR: Write one page on your personal feelings about gossip.

DO YOU KNOW A GOSSIP?

(You **do not** send this to the instructor)

IDENTIFY A PERSON OR PEOPLE WHO HAVE COME TO YOUR MIND DURING THE EXPLANATION OF "THE GOSSIP". CIRCLE THE "Y" IF THE STATEMENT IS TRUE ABOUT THE PERSON AND CIRCLE THE "N" IF IT IS NOT TRUE.

Y N This person seems to "let the cat out of the bag" far too frequently.

Y N This person enjoys telling me about someone else's misfortune.

Y N This person has little going on in his or her own life but knows a lot about what's going on in everyone else's.

Y N The term meddling often describes this person.

Y N I know of people who have been deeply hurt by this person's stories about them.

Y N This person belittles others.

Y N This person snoops out information but doesn't keep secrets.

Y N This person loves to talk about everybody but himself or herself.

Y N I can point to specific situations in which this person embellished a story in ways that were flagrantly not true.

Y N Most people would agree that this person is not trustworthy.

Y N This person seems to comb through the flowers of a person's life to find the weeds.

Y N This person acts secretive but is often telling a secret.

Y N Other people look to this person for the inside scoop.

Y N This person can become very self-righteous if someone else gossips about him or her.

Y N When I am with this person, I sometimes feel as if he or she is inappropriately prying into areas of my life.

Scoring: Total the number of Y's you circled. If you circled ten or more Y's, you are certainly in a high-maintenance relationship with *A Gossip*.

Adapted, with permission, from "High Maintenance Relationships" by Les Parrott III

**(NOT QUITE) EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW
ABOUT GOSSIP**

Isn't gossip just a part of our human behavior? Aren't we all prone to gossiping and speaking negatively about others? If these statements aren't true, why does gossip and criticism seem to flow so easily from our lips? Gossips are people that feel "knowledge is power." They want to have the inside information and be a part of the inner circle of information. Often, we use the word "tattle-tale" in describing students who share information about others. Notice the similarities between a "gossip" and a "tattle-tale."

UNDERSTANDING THE MIND OF THE GOSSIP

- Gossip gives a sense of social acceptance because someone has "special" information.
- Gossip helps others feel better about their own lives. "My life doesn't look so bad after hearing about Joe's issues."
- Gossip is a covert way of confronting other people. It allows one to bring up issues and not have to directly talk to the person about them.
- Gossips may tell "secrets" as a way to gain power, prestige or authority.
- While it may seem odd, many gossips don't see the wrong in talking about other people. However, if you were to say something negative about them... look out!!
- People who share negative information may become upset and angry with you if you challenge their behavior. A short fuse often is attached to the firecracker of gossip.
- A gossip may use the strategy of "buttering you up" in order to prepare you for the information. "Mr. Karl, you are such a good teacher. You always have time to listen to our problems. Can I share something that happened? Well, so you know what Gina said..." This type of approach gets us sucked into the negative talk before we know what hit us.
- And lastly, people who criticize and use gossip are often trying to create disunity and division among people. They are trying to separate friends, parents, teachers or anyone else that may be their target.

THE TATTLE-TALE SYNDROME

A person may tattle for many reasons. Listed below are a few possible reasons.

- For revenge. A person has been hurt by another person and wants to get them in trouble.
- For recognition. The student wants the adult to notice them. If the student brings something important to the attention of the adult, the adult may like them more.
- To be included. If the child makes a person aware of a problem (exclusion, cheating at a game), the adult may require that the child be included or be allowed to play again.
- Due to insecurity. When one feels left out, hurt or injured, they may tattle on others to feel better about themselves.

These are but a few reasons for tattling. How can we handle this frequent problem on the playground, in class, in our homes, without creating more of a problem?

1. When a child tattles about a situation, unless there is something dangerous involved, do not respond immediately. If we react to the tattling, we will reinforce the child's pattern. Instead, let the child know you heard them and thank them. If they persist, let them know you will take care of it when you feel the time is right. Avoid their manipulation of your emotions and the pressure to respond immediately.
2. Ask the child to write out their concerns on a piece of paper. Tell them to share the problem in writing and you will look at it when time permits. Again, it is important to let the student know that you are in charge of the time frame and not them.
3. If the child is complaining about an injustice or something that happened to them, be sure to find out if they have approached the guilty party with their concerns. If not, ask them to do so. If this is an issue or they are scared, offer to go with them as they discuss the issue with the person. Do not be the problem solver for the child. Once you are caught in that cycle, it will be repeated over and over. Any parent knows this pattern that can occur between siblings.

In the next section, I will share a process to be used within your classroom or school when children are involved in chronic tattling.

SHUTTING DOWN THE GOSSIP AND TATTLE-TALE

(Many of the following strategies are found in the book "What To Do When Words Get Ugly.")

The following ideas may be helpful to teach your students. This will enable them to have constructive ways of avoiding being caught in the web of negative conversation.

1. **Examining our own life-** It is important to remember that we all fall prey to this trap of gossip, criticism and negative talk. Yes, some are more prone than others, but still, we are all capable of it. A void judging the student or adult. This is not a good time to lecture or to use guilt. Instead, there are some effective interventions that help reduce the tendency for this person to use these tactics for communication. Once we recognize their habit patterns, we can begin to teach them new methods of discussion.
2. **Silence is usually not effective-** While silence seems like a nice way to deal with a gossip or tattletale, it usually does not prevent them from continuing with their comments. In fact, silence can almost seem like agreement or a license to continue. Re-direction or a change of subject may be helpful.

Question: "Did you hear what Barbara did with her boyfriend?"

Answer: "No, I didn't. Hey, did you understand all the homework in math class?"

3. **Why am I so lucky to hear this?-** As soon as you recognize that the person is sharing gossip or being negative, it is a good time to start asking a few questions.
 - Are you sure I need to know about this?
 - Is there something I need to do with this information?
 - Does the person know you are telling me about them?
 - Who told you this information?
 - Before I hear anymore, do you mind if I check this out for myself?

Obviously, each question would depend on the situation. Be kind, friendly, but inquisitive. The purpose is to let the person know that you are not going to listen without checking things out a little further. You are not merely a wall absorbing the negative information.

4. Hold it right there, pardner!!-

- Question: "Have you heard about Tom's marriage?"
Answer: "No, but maybe later I'll check into it."
- Question: "Can you keep a secret?"
Answer: "Not really."
- Question: "Can you believe what the principal did?"
Answer: "They are the principal."
- Question: "I heard something about Jenny, but I don't know whether I should tell?"
Answer: "You probably shouldn't."

While the ideas found in #4 are somewhat "tongue in cheek" ideas, I am sure you get the message that we need to short circuit some of these ideas. By finding ways to cut them off before they get started, many a harmful word will be prevented.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

Let me say that there are times that it is very appropriate to speak and share about other people. In an evaluation, a conference, or a meeting, people may talk about situations and people. Or, in a family, parents may talk with their children about issues. The key is whether the purpose of the discussion is to hurt a reputation, create disunity among people, convince someone of a certain perspective or generally cause pain for another person in their life. Yes, I am talking about the motives behind the discussion. If the information is shared to find a way to support, encourage or strengthen another person, perhaps it won't fall into the category of gossip.

Example: A student comes to the teacher to share that another student is thinking of running away from home. As the teacher listens, it is apparent that this student is worried about his/her friend but doesn't know what to do.

Example: One student shares with another student that the teacher is in a bad mood. (NEVER!!). They decide to try to be extra quiet in class and write the teacher a nice note. (I know this happens all the time in your classroom).

Example: A colleague tells you that Rita's parents are getting a divorce. You both agree that the counselor may need to know this and encourage Rita to talk with the counselor about her pain.

As you can see, this type of approach is very different from simply sharing information for the purpose of telling stories about people.

5. **Have you talked with the people involved?**- I have found that in many situations, the person who is sharing the information has not had the courtesy or desire to talk directly to the people they are sharing about. If they are upset with a person, encourage them to discuss this with them. "I am so mad at Tony, do you know what he did?" "Before you share anymore, have you tried to talk this out with Tony?" Or "Would you like me to go with you and we can try to work this out with Tony?" Unfortunately, some people do not want to solve the situation, they just want to be bitter and offended. This is not healthy for the person or for anyone they end up sharing their venomous perspective with in conversations.
6. **Apologizing and Forgiving: Two powerful actions-** As people begin to share frustration over a situation, I try to find out their motives and their agenda. Do they want to reconcile the situation? Do they want to find a place of peace and agreement? Is there a chance that they are seeing the situation through a "skewed" perspective? Are they open to guidance, counselor correction? I may ask the person, "I know you are sharing a frustration about another person, are you wanting to work the problem out or just share your anger?" Or "Before you go on, let me ask you a question. 'Are you wanting me to give you feedback or counsel in this situation.'" The important thing is to lay a foundation prior to getting caught up in the conversation.

These simple strategies will help the students and adults to minimize the negative talk throughout the school, home or business. Helping people see that their conversations are negative and unproductive for solutions may begin to change the very milieu of the building.

CASE STUDY ASSIGNMENT

(SEND TO INSTRUCTOR) –Choose one of the following studies.

Case Study #1

Todd is 15 years old. He is tall and gangly. His coordination is somewhat lacking as he regularly trips and stumbles. And, unfortunately for Todd, his complexion suffers from moderate to serious acne. While Todd is friendly to people, his comical mishaps and frequent swollen, red pimples have made him a target of jokes and the topic of negative conversations. He finds himself isolated at school and without many friends.

1. Assuming you had Todd in class, would you intervene in his situation? Why or why not?
2. What advice would you give Todd? If you wouldn't intervene, skip to question #3.
3. If Todd's parents asked you what the problem was with their son's social interactions, how would you respond?

Case Study #2

Julia is 9 years old and loves to play sports. She has three older brothers and has grown-up wrestling with her brothers, pushing her way around the house in order to get her toys away from them, and having to argue with them in order to watch "her" television programs. Julia finds herself in constant arguments at school with her peers and has a tendency to bully them. The rest of your class is complaining about Julia and you have had several of the other parents call you.

1. Your principal calls you in the office and explains that he/she has received numerous calls about Julia. You are asked, "What are you going to do about it?" And the answer is...
2. Several of your students come to you and explain the actions of Julia. They want to know what they should do to help her. How would you reply?

Six Communication Skills Every Child Should Know

Teach them young!

Teaching children how to communicate politely and effectively is one of society's most important tasks. Assuming that children will learn proper communication skills without adult guidance is a big mistake. Parents and Teachers should begin teaching children basic communication skills at birth and continue to hone their child's skills as the child matures. Communicating well with others is a basic tenet of society.

Daily conversations with children are an excellent way for adults to model basic communication skills. Deliberate conversations with children, using polite conversational skills, help lay a foundation for good communication later in life. The ultimate goal is to raise a person who converses courteously, who listens to what others say, and who is able to clearly express his or her own thoughts, ideas and opinions.

1) Teach the aspect of eye contact. It is important that children be taught to establish eye contact with the person with whom they are speaking. Looking directly at the other person in the conversation shows interest and increases listening skills. There are some cultural issues which should always be taken into account, but generally, eye contact can be taught effectively.

2) Encourage the child to speak clearly and correctly. Using good pronunciation, not rushing speech and using good grammar are all aspects of communication that adults should model for children. Parents should pay attention to how their children are speaking and gently correct without embarrassing. Teachers should find positive ways to assist the child during classroom discussions. There is no need to correct mistakes in front of others, doing so may cause children to feel self-conscious, inhibiting their speech in public.

3) Remind the child to take turns and don't interrupt. Children must be trained not to jump into a conversation just because they feel like talking. It is important that adults curb this behavior and teach children self-control. When a child interrupts, the parent should stop their conversation, firmly tell the interrupting child to wait their turn, and then pick-up the conversation where they left off. Educators may use a similar approach and have the student wait his/her turn.

4) Modeling good listening skills to children is the best way to teach good listening. When conversing with children, listen attentively and repeat key phrases back to the child so that the child feels heard. Ask appropriate questions of the child and allow the child to respond. Show interest in what the child has to say. The best conversationalists are those who listen well.

5) Enter conversations politely. There is a correct way to join a conversation that does not feel rude or disruptive. Approach the group quietly, smile to those in conversation, listen to what people are saying, and wait until they are spoken to before speaking. Those in the group should smile and nod to recognize the person joining them, when the speaker finishes, the group can greet the newcomer and make introductions.

6) Walking away from a conversation with good feelings is a crucial skill to possess and one that adults should work hard at teaching to their children. The child needs to learn to use appropriate volume and tone within a conversation. The use of sarcasm will reduce the communication effectiveness and cause potential communication barriers.

Children need to also understand nonverbal communication and cues. Rude facial expressions like eye rolling and grimaces as well as yawning at a speaker, hair twisting, turning one's back to the speaker, finger nail picking and checking one's watch, are all bad manners. Children need to learn that their nonverbal actions and behaviors can make people feel badly. Learning to read other people's nonverbal cues is an important lesson too, and with time, children will begin to understand when to end conversations, finish a story or change a subject.

Being an adept communicator is a necessary skill in today's world. Children need guidance from their parents to learn how to communicate effectively and politely. Good listening skills, self-control, use of good grammar, and sensitivity are all skills that are learned. If parents and teachers start modeling conversation skills early, they will help the children develop refined and sophisticated communication behaviors that will benefit them greatly in adulthood.

ARE YOU A REACTIVE OR PROACTIVE EDUCATOR?

REACTIVE EDUCATORS....

- 1. Don't plan how to deal with difficult students.**
- 2. Personalize student responses.**
- 3. Give up on students.**

The impact on the student is discouragement, anger, revenge, frustration or any number of ineffective responses. For the educator, stress is increased and the flow of teaching is interrupted. For the class as a whole, they lose trust in the educator and become frustrated by the negative interactions. Even if they feel the student is wrong, they will generally identify with the student.

PROACTIVE EDUCATORS...

- 1. Recognize that they have a choice on how they respond to the students.**
- 2. Build relationships with difficult students.**
- 3. Have individualized, even structured plans, for difficult students.**

The student is able to save face and evaluate their behavior without being embarrassed. They are more willing to work together with the teacher instead of against the teacher. The educator feels successful and hopes for possible change. The class feels connected to the educator and sees a caring aspect to the approach. Even if they identify with the student, the other class members usually support the educator's approach.

THE CLASSROOM

(Or other appropriate settings)

SHOULD WE TREAT ALL KIDS THE SAME?

Answer the following questions. You do not need to send this to the instructor. Examine your approach in the classroom and your belief system about "sameness."

1. Are all kids the same?
2. If we treat each student "different", is that fair?
3. What are some of the differences in students?

What are some of the reasons for differences?

4. How do you in your classroom (or school) treat kids the same?

How do you treat them differently?

5. Does your ethnic (or personal life perspective) impact the way you relate to other people? Is this good/bad/neither?

HELPFUL GUIDE TO CREATING PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES FOR SOLVING THESE PROBLEMS

PROBLEM: EXPECT THE WORST FROM KIDS- this promotes a self-fulfilling prophecy approach in the classroom. Have you ever been told negative things about a student before having them in class? How did you respond to the student initially?

SOLUTION: EXPECT THE BEST FROM KIDS- start the year, month, week or day off with a positive perspective of your class. Don't carryover frustrations from previous days. Meet the kids at the door and welcome them into your classroom. Give them a pat on the back, a high five, a handshake. Let each student know they are welcome in your class.

PROBLEM: NEVER TELL STUDENTS WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THEM- students need constant reminders of the expectations. A sure prescription for problems is to assume they know the rules, the guidelines and the consequences. This is especially true in the secondary level or schools where students have more than one teacher.

SOLUTION: MAKE THE IMPLICIT EXPLICIT- it is imperative that we let the students know what is expected from them each day. Do you write out the assignments on the board, on a piece of paper, on the overhead? Are your classroom rules posted? You can't make it too clear for the students.

PROBLEM: PUNISH AND CRITICIZE KIDS OFTEN- in today's world, students get enough of this. Being negative and using sarcasm will only alienate the students in the classroom and create undercurrents of frustration. If your style is to make jokes ABOUT the students, try changing the focus of your jokes to yourself. This is much safer and will eliminate resentment from your students.

SOLUTION: REWARDS OVER PUNISHMENT- find a way to be positive with the students. Regardless of age, stickers and stars are very effective for external and extrinsic rewards. I have seen high school students cover their notebooks with these rewards. Use intermittent methods of reinforcement. Walk around the classroom and periodically place a star on a students' paper. When they ask what it was for, tell them it was for just being. When other students ask for a star, let them know you will get around to everyone ... eventually. After all, there are many days in the school year. I find that when I begin to walk around the class, students are more on task, quieter and looking for the elusive reward.

PROBLEM: PUNISHING THE WHOLE CLASS IF ONE STUDENT MISBEHAVES- this type of decision will certainly stir up the word "unfair" in a classroom. Allowing one student to have the power to destroy the whole class is a major mistake just as allowing the student the power to get a class reward. I have seen many a student undermine an entire class reward. What do you think that does to peer relationships? Yes, this may work occasionally and certainly we need to be open to whole-class rewards. But be careful of the pitfall of one student sabotaging the class.

SOLUTION: LET THE PUNISHMENT (consequences) FIT THE CRIME- Adler and Dreikurs were very clear in their teaching of natural and logical consequences. Help each student see the reasoning behind a consequence. They may not agree or like it, but be sure to explain it from your perspective. National speaker Connie Dembrowsky said, "It is not the severity of the consequence that changes the behavior, it is the certainty of the consequence that changes the behavior."

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PROBLEM: NEVER GIVE STUDENTS PRIVILEGES- being organized and disciplined is one thing. Not allowing students the opportunity to earn privileges and extra "goodies" is asking for trouble. In life, we constantly earn extra incentives and privileges via our behavior (bonus at work, kind note or remark, pat on the back, stay out later)

SOLUTION: WHEN USING PUNISHMENT, REMOVE PRIVILEGES- this is a very effective way of working with the class. Be sure they understand that there are many privileges they have in the classroom. When I was an elementary teacher, I made it crystal clear that recess was a privilege not a right. They earned their recess by following the rules. When problems occurred, they lost the privilege. Eating lunch was a right, but eating it with their peers was a privilege. Working on the computer, extra art or p.e. time, helping with other students-all privileges. At home, it is the same thing. My children know that staying up to a certain time, staying out past a certain time, driving the car without their license (JUST KIDDING! !)- All privileges. If you are having trouble finding consequences for someone, institute a privilege that they can lose. Now you have a consequence. I have counseled many families to allow their children to earn an allowance so they can use this as a consequence for not doing their chores.

PROBLEM: PUNISH EVERY MISBEHAVIOR YOU SEE- regardless of severity or situation, nail the sucker!! Hold the class accountable for everything and don't give them a chance to get away with something. Oh yeah, this will work.

SOLUTION: "IGNOR"ANCE IS BLISS- pick and choose your battles. There needs to be discipline and structure within a classroom, but with 20, 30 or more students, there must be a place to allow mistakes. Obviously, this is an individual decision. What I feel comfortable ignoring, you may not. We must keep our classrooms safe and positive, but every giggle, talk out, thrown piece of paper and out of seat can't be addressed ... that is, if the instructor wants to maintain sanity-their own sanity.

PROBLEM: THREATEN AND WARN KIDS OFTEN- keep warning them and maybe they will get it. RIGHT!!! Threats and warnings are only effective if there is follow through.

SOLUTION: CONSISTENCY IS THE BEST POLICY- one more time means "one more time." If you tell the class that next time there will be a consequence, then next time should bring a consequence (whether individually or corporately). Remember the Connie Dembrowsky quote earlier in this section.

PROBLEM: USE THE SAME PUNISHMENT FOR EVERY STUDENT- all students are the same. They should be treated the same regardless of individual differences. You may have been told this in school, but in reality we know this doesn't work. Don't be afraid to see your classroom as 30 different students.

SOLUTION: KNOW EACH STUDENT WELL- I am not recommending that you have 30 sets of rules. It is important to have a general set of rules for all students-listening, respect, no put-downs. However, within the context of your classroom, one student may require a phone call home for a violation where another student may benefit from just meeting with the teacher. Don't be afraid to exercise the class authority you have as an educator.

PROBLEM: MAINTAIN PERSONAL DISTANCE FROM STUDENTS- don't let them know who you are, your personal likes/dislikes, about your family or friends. Be a mystery to them.

SOLUTION: TREAT STUDENTS WITH LOVE AND RESPECT- relationship is the strongest motivator for students. Picture yourself as a giant M & M-you are the reinforcement for kids (Now this may be a scary thought, but it is true). Be real with them and let them know who you are and what you are all about. They will receive from you with a greater respect.

ACTIVITIES TO REDUCE GOSSIP AND NEGATIVE CONVERSATION

(Try these in your classroom. Send to instructor a 1-2 page summary of results)

I. THE TELEPHONE GAME

In order to reduce the amount of negative talk, criticism and gossip in a classroom, I have used the "telephone game" as a method of awareness and discussion. Most of you remember it. You say a phrase or story to one person and they need to share it with another person. It is shared around in a circle and the last person tells what they heard. Invariably, the final story or phrase is very different from the initial story. This allows the students to see a graphic example of the problem with gossip.

Sample stories or phrases:

- a) Last night the basketball team lost by 12 points. Jim scored 20 points and Tom scored 7. Tonight we should win by 25 points or more. (use real names in your school)
- b) Karen's birthday was last week. She invited Sarah, Kim and Shelley. However, she did not ask Bill or Donna. (Again, use names of your students).
- c) Patty is good in math and english, but has problems with history and science. She did very well on her music test.
- d) Steve and Tim saw three people sneak into the movie. Chris and Joyce saw them also. You will find excellent results from this activity. The more students involved, the greater chance of it being messed up. As an incentive for the class to remember, offer a reward or bonus if they get it right (more recess time, no homework, extra points for their grades). This will help ensure that a student doesn't mess it up on purpose.

II. KEEP A GOSSIP LOG

Have a class discussion on the dangers of gossip. Help them to understand that the more times something is repeated, the greater the chance it will be incorrect. As an assignment, have the students keep track for one or two days of any gossip or negative conversation they hear at school or home. When they share it at school, ask them if they felt the information they heard was accurate or not.

III. NO GOSSIP DAY

Set up a day where your class agrees to not speak negative about others. Have them with partner to help in accountability. If they slip up, have them mark in down on paper. The next day, let them share how they did with the assignment. Find out if there were difficult places or people for them to be around. Encourage them to have more of these days.

SEND TO INSTRUCTOR—1-2 PAGE SUMMARY OF RESULTS.

THIS IS A SAMPLE OF WHAT YOUR "SAFETY NET" MIGHT LOOK LIKE. MODIFY AND MAKE PERTINENT TO YOUR SITUATION (CLASSROOM, SCHOOL OR HOME).

CLASSROOM SAFETY NET

(Send to Instructor 2-3 pages)

The safety net concept is meant to create boundaries and clear guidelines for students in the classroom. Naturally, this is effective as a school-wide endeavor, classroom project or in one's home. You may have other areas to add to this "safety net" idea. This is meant to help you be creative, not to limit your concepts. For the purpose of consistency, this sample is set up for a classroom.

I. First, and foremost, a list of classroom rules would be necessary. Depending on the classes you teach and the grade level, each set of rules would be specific to those needs. However, there may be some general rules that transcend all classes and grade levels. Below are the classroom rules I used when teaching at the elementary and secondary levels. I stated the rule in positive terms then explained what it looked like.

- **SPEAK POSITIVE TO ONE ANOTHER- NO PUT-DOWNS** (I did not allow students to say shut up, stupid, geek, idiot, etc. I wanted my classroom to be free of negative comments. This was powerful and was a major component of my relationship with the students.
- **LISTEN EFFECTIVELY- HEAR WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING**
- **BE RESPONSIBLE- COMPLETE WORK ON TIME**
- **FOLLOW DIRECTIONS- RESPOND TO THE TEACHER'S REQUESTS**
- **HAVE FUN- FOLLOW RULES #1 - #4**

I found it helpful to teach these rules throughout the year. This is especially true at the secondary level where new kids are coming into your class or at a school that is very transient in its' population.

There were four specific times I taught these rules-

1. Beginning of the year
2. Between Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks (those 3 weeks can be very long)
3. Somewhere around the beginning to middle of March (or when the weather starts turning nice.)
4. Within the last few weeks of the year (most students forget that school doesn't end until the last day).

For this assignment, you should develop your own classroom rules and a way to share them with the students.

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II. Rewards for the classroom (and individual students) is important. It may be helpful to make a list of rewards that you want to use throughout the year. This helps eliminate some of the "brain-cramps" that take place in the middle of a crisis with a student or class. It is easy to feel like "I have tried everything" when life is caving in on you. A list of reinforcements and possible interventions give a person guidance. This is very helpful for parents as well. It allows them the opportunity to look at what they have tried and what is still available. Be willing to modify your list as you hear and see new ideas and interventions.

- Extra art time, p.e. time, recess time.
- Spending time with another teacher, helping out in the office or another classroom.
- Cross age tutoring (helping a younger child).
- Peer tutoring (helping a child of the same age)-within or without your class.
- Watching a movie.
- Playing games.
- Developing the next test or assignment for the class (really!! Kids like this).
- Teacher for the day, hour or minute (how long can you stand it?)
- Class decision for free time.
- Free reading, computer time.
- Allow free time to talk or do anything they want (within the classroom rules)

These are just a few ideas. Make your own list. Be as exhaustive as you can-it will help you not to become exhausted later.

III. Consequences are an important part of learning and keeping an effective classroom.

As you did with the reward list, a list of consequences is also helpful. Talk to other educators or parents. Draw from a wide range of experiences.

- No recess.
- Limit passing time between classes.
- Lunch in classroom or with teacher.
- Come early to school or stay after school.
- Phone call to parents.
- Conference with teacher.
- Conference with teacher and parents.
- Note home to parents.
- Contact with administration.
- Do the "conflict resolution" worksheet.
- Conference with other students.
- Limit free time in class.
- Miss out on special activities or rewards.

It is important to note that I connect with the parent not as a punishment, but as a way of communicating. I don't expect the parents' to carry out my consequences or punishments.

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But, I do want them to be aware of what is happening at school. This reduces my frustration if there is minimal parental support. We set ourselves up for frustration if we "expect" the home to follow through with our consequences. If the roles were reversed, would we comply? "Hello teacher. My daughter was late coming home last night so would you take away her recess as a punishment?" I think not.

Please make a list of consequences you use or would use within your setting.

IV. Parent contacts will help develop an effective safety net for each student. In my independent study class titled "Parents: Adversary or Ally?" I share multiple methods of parent contact. Making phone calls to each parent is a crucial part of the safety net. I make short, quick calls to every student's parent. I take about 30 seconds for each call and I do this on a regular basis.

"Hello, Mr. Thompson. This is Michael Sedler and I have Angela in my 2nd period history class (or 3rd grade class or ...). Yes, I just wanted to let you know that I think it is going to be a great year. I look forward to working with you. Have a great evening"

CLICK!

This call is not a conference. It is an initial positive connection with parents. Try it. Let the parent know their child is doing well, making progress, showing up on time, breathing well ... whatever.

I have found that the parent is more open to me as an educator and it enhances the student safety net.

Make one or two of these calls to parents. Let me know how it goes.

If there are other areas you see as important to the safety net (connecting with coaches, other teachers, administration, friends), please include that in your paper.

This would be an excellent topic within your classroom (or within your school). Feel free to use this at a staff meeting or to share with your administrator. I use this to teach students how to not get caught in the "pressure zone."

FIGHTING PEER PRESSURE

- **ASK QUESTIONS**- asking questions puts you in power and the other person on the defensive. Questions can cause the other person to back down from being so pushy.
- **SAY NO LIKE YOU MEAN IT**- don't mumble your no or act apologetic. Eye contact is important and be forceful. Be certain of your NO!
- **BE REPETITIVE**- repeat yourself, use the broken record approach. "I'm not interested." "I said, I'm not interested." "No thanks, I'm not interested."
- **STAY AWAY FROM PRESSURE ZONES**- when feeling pressured, change the scenery and location of where you are.
- **AVOID STRESSFUL SITUATIONS**- if there are certain places you feel especially pressured, don't go there.
- **USE THE BUDDY SYSTEM**- it is easier to say no and avoid pressure when with someone else that supports you.
- **CONSIDER THE RESULTS OF GIVING IN**- recognize the consequences of following the group. Whom will it impact? How will you feel tomorrow?
- **CONNECT WITH THE LEADER OF THE PACK**- get the leader alone and explain your feelings. Ask him/her to not pressure you.
- **DON'T BELIEVE "EVERYONE IS DOING IT"**- if you don't do it, then everyone isn't. How about that for power?
- **BE YOUR OWN BEST FRIEND**- avoid put downs to yourself and negative self-talk. Build yourself up with positive affirmations. You are important.
- **DON'T PRESSURE OTHERS**- stay away from the same traps that you don't like.
- **SPEAK OUT**- take the side of the underdog. Fight for those who are picked on. Support the right for a person to express a contrary opinion.
- **WATCH YOUR MOODS**- your moods can affect the way you act.
- **EVALUATE YOUR FRIENDSHIPS**- so... who are you hanging out with?
- **IF NECESSARY, FIND NEW (OR REAL) FRIENDS**- you need to have people who stand up for you and support your individuality.

PROMOTING ACTIVE LISTENING IN THE CLASSROOM

By Mary Renck Jalongo (Childhood Education Magazine)

At a conference session on improving children's listening skills, one educator remarked, "I hate to sound like a grouchy old teacher, but I have been teaching for 16 years and I think that kids today just don't know how to listen." As this teacher spoke, many others around the room nodded and murmured agreement. Many educators around the world have expressed similar concerns regarding children's listening skills.

Before we argue that children of today are not as good at listening as we were as children, we need to realize that adult's listening skills may be equally deficient. Most adults are preoccupied, distracted and forgetful. Research suggests that adults expect much more from children than they do themselves. We expect children to listen in school as much as 50 percent of the time. Even in developmentally appropriate classrooms, children are asked to spend in excess of 25 percent of the time listening. If we expect children to become good listeners, we will need to do more than worry, complain or demand. We need to teach them to become active listeners.

Listening involves the reception and processing of incoming data. To listen is not just to hear; it is the active construction of meaning from all the signals-verbal and nonverbal-a speaker is sending. Listening is more than hearing because good listeners filter out much of what they hear in order to concentrate on the message. Listening is also less than a compliance, for it is possible to both hear and understand, yet not respond in exactly the way the speaker expects or wishes.

First of all, students are not the only ones who should listen and teachers are not the only speakers. Rather, children and teachers need to be good listeners and children should listen to one another as carefully as they do to their teachers.

Second, good listeners are active. They get involved with what they hear, both intellectually and emotionally. Such listeners give complete attention to what they hear, actively process the information, make pertinent comments, and ask relevant questions.

Despite educator's convictions that a strong, positive correlation exists between listening well and learning effectively, discrepancies between what educators say and do with regard to children's listening are commonplace. For example, many children devote more time to listening than any other classroom activity. Yet, listening rarely finds its way into the language arts curriculum, math curriculum, etc. Much of the listening expected of students is simply following directions or gathering facts; the ability to listen critically is far down the American public school's practical list of priorities.

Studies show that less than 2 percent of the population has any formal educational experience with listening. Moreover, many teachers know of few, if any, curriculum guides (either commercial or district produced) that emphasize developing children's listening skills. It is little wonder that teachers often feel poorly prepared to build children's listening skills.

A FEW IDEAS

When a child shares a rather lengthy comment or illustration and other children become restless, we feel we need to intervene. We can still let the children know that we are listening by channeling the child's enthusiasm to other means of self-expression, such as writing or drawing. A constructive comment might be, "It sounds like you had an exciting experience. But don't tell us the ending yet-keep us in suspense.

That would be a great story for your writing group this afternoon." Even when circumstances make it difficult for us to give our total attention to students, they need to know of our interest and our listening desires.

Instead of the old "Show and Tell" format used in many schools, we can utilize the "Show and Ask" approach. The child shares a simple story or object and invites questions from the group. It may be necessary for the teacher to model this initially. They will learn to stay on task, be interested in another person's ideas and gain knowledge on how to present their own area of interest.

After lunch, when children come in, stand silently in front of them and hold up an interesting object (a sea shell, a picture, art object). Have them formulate 5 questions about the object. They can go into small groups and ask one another or prepare the questions.

TEN SUGGESTIONS TO INCORPORATING LISTENING IN SCHOOLS.

1. Incorporate listening goals into student portfolios. Have a section on "listens and responds to stories read aloud." Have students place best drawings and stories in portfolio based on books read aloud in class.
2. Refer some of the children's questions back to the group. "What do you think?"
3. Use of imagination stretchers. "Can you picture the cross between a zebra and an elephant?" Describe this to a friend then draw a picture.
4. Use of graphic organizers. "Now that we have read about the trip of this explorer. Draw a map of his trip across the ocean plotting out the land formation."
5. Conduct interviews. Allow visitors to come and have the students prepare questions in advance as well as impromptu questions.
6. Use collections. Have students bring in collections of articles (baseball cards, teddy bears, shells).
7. Use of re-enactment. If the students know a particular story well, have them be the characters and act out the story or tell it to another person not familiar with the story.
8. Explain how something functions. "Today I brought a specific tool from the house. Let me explain how it works."
9. Try partner art. Place the students in pairs. Have one person explain a common object. This could be a car, dog, house, anything they choose. The second person needs to draw a picture of what the person is describing. The first person cannot see the picture until it is complete.
10. Use the "K-W-L" approach. Before going on a trip, write out three columns. The "K" column stands for what we Know; the "W" column stands for What we Want to know; and the "L" column stands for what we Learned. Fill in the first two before the trip and the final one after.

In order for the teachers to be role models of active listening, they need to believe that:

** teaching and learning can occur without teacher talk.

** the emphasis should be on learning how to think rather than on collecting information

** most good questions should encourage deeper thinking and have more than one answer

** children should play a major role in formulating questions and the teacher should probe deeper whenever an intriguing idea is raised

** children need to relate a subject matter to their own lives

** children should spend as much time listening to one another as they do listening to the teacher

** problems and conflicts often can be resolved by listening and talking together.

GENERAL LISTENING SKILLS

Communication occurs when a listener hears and understands a speaker's essential thoughts, acts and feelings. Many conflicts continue because of poor communication between people. In order to communicate effectively, people must use active listening, summarizing and clarifying.

Active listening means using nonverbal behaviors to show you hear and understand. These nonverbal behaviors include tone of voice, eye contact, facial expressions, posture and gesture. If you are leaning forward, smiling, nodding your head and ignoring outside distractions, you are actively listening.

Summarizing means you do two things. First, you restate facts by repeating the most important points, organizing interests and discarding extra information. Second, you reflect feelings about the conflict. It is very important when summarizing to recognize feelings in the situation as well as facts.

Clarifying means using open-ended questions and statements to get additional information and to make sure you understand. Some examples of open-ended questions include:

How did you feel about that?

What do you think is keeping you from reaching an agreement about this problem?

Open-ended questions can be answered in many different ways and help keep people talking.

Closed questions can be answered with a yes or no. Closed questions tend to discourage further discussion.

For example:

Did you feel angry about what happened? (An open question would be "Tell me how you felt about what happened.")

The Basics To Helping Students Get Along

Helping Children Learn to Get Along

"Hey, I had that first!" "Tony hit me!" Do children's quarrels leave you frazzled? Most teachers and parents feel that they must step in to keep children from hurting each other or being unfair. Getting along with others is a skill that can be learned. Be patient as you teach conflict resolution skills that help children form friendships and work successfully with others. Model the kind and empathetic behavior you want the children to practice.

Find out why the children are fighting.

Most children's fights serve some purpose. One child may be trying to get adult attention. Another may be trying to get a friend or sibling to interact with him. A child may be acting out feelings she doesn't have the words to express.

Identify the problem.

Ask each child what he or she thinks the problem is. Remind them of such rules as "No hitting. You may not hit anyone and no one may hit you." Don't spend time on finger pointing. Help those involved put their conflict into words: "It looks like Sara wants the truck right now, and so does Josh. Is that right?"

Help them cool off.

Without taking sides, make sure that all the children involved are calm enough to talk. You can tell the children, "When you feel less upset, it will be time to solve the problem." Help the children find ways to calm themselves so they will be ready to solve the problem.

Generate alternatives.

Ask the children, "What can you do so you could both be happy?" You can record their ideas, but let them do the thinking. Usually, at least one child will make a suggestion. If the children can't think of any ideas, consider throwing in a really odd one to get them started.

Evaluate alternatives and choose a plan.

Work on empathy and fairness. Ask the children to evaluate different strategies. For example, "Josh, can Sara play with the truck first, while you play with the cement mixer? We can set the kitchen timer for 5 minutes, and then you can trade toys. Does this seem fair to you?" The children can decide which action to take.

Follow up and reinforce good behavior.

Decide when you will check with the children to see if the plan is working. Acknowledge acts of kindness with a smile or a pat on the back.

HELPING STUDENTS RESOLVE PROBLEMS (WITHOUT THE ADULT/PARENT SOLVING THE PROBLEM)

Do these sound familiar?

"Teacher, Kim hit me."

"Mom, Tara took my doll."

"Teacher, tell him to give me back my book bag."

"Dad, Paul keeps bugging me. Tell him to stop."

And on and on and on. These types of comments are so common that we forget how often we hear them. And, most of us use an expedient process for dealing with these areas. We go to the child and say, "Stop hitting him." "Give back the doll." -Need I say more?

I believe there is a more effective way of handling these situations. It will avoid the adult from having to solve the problem and it will teach the student (or child) to work out the issues on their own. You may teach this process to one student, your entire class or entire school. I have taught the following procedure to classrooms, grade levels and entire schools. The results have been excellent. After one particular training, a student went to her teacher and said, "Mrs. Jones, remember when I asked you to tell Sue to stop teasing me? Don't do it yet. I want to go to her again and ask myself." The teacher was overjoyed.

1. When a student (or your own child) comes to you, be sure to ask questions. "Have you asked for the doll back?" "Did you ask them to stop hitting you?" If they respond that they have not, be sure to **send them back to the other child**. They are not to say, "The teacher said..." **This should come from them**, in a polite but firm way. It may be necessary to practice with them once or twice. "How are you going to ask for the book bag?"
2. If they have done this and they still indicate that there is no solution, **offer to go with them**. This is very important. Normally, the procedure is for the adult to go and carry the message for the student. The other student may respond reluctantly or begin to argue with the adult. Now you are in the middle of the situation and a frustration may begin to occur. However, this time your approach is different. **You are not the messenger**.
3. **Go with the student and stand there**. Tell the student to approach the other student again with their request. As the adult, **you are there as an observer, a witness** to what is occurring. As the child re-approaches the other person, it is amazing how many times it gets resolved. The mere presence of an authority figure allows for resolution without saying a word. But, the students are able to resolve it without us interfering with them.
4. This type of approach allows me to **compliment the students for handling the situation themselves**. I invested no emotional energy and was able to observe their process of conflict resolution. If one student is harsh, unkind or insensitive, I can now address from an objective viewpoint-"this is what I saw you do," instead of, "this is what I was told you did." I use this with my own children, on the playground, in the classroom or any other setting where tattling and gossip are trying to sway me.
5. If the students are unable to resolve it themselves, as the adult, **we may need to intervene**. At least, at this point, we now have a perspective as to attitudes, situation and motives of the students. Once you have shown the students this process, they come to you less and less and address their own issues more and more. This is great social skill training.

THE

SCHOOL

(and other interesting places)

Within a school setting, it is common to find two groups of people: the bullies and the victims. They have a tremendous impact upon the environment and culture of the school. The next few pages will help identify these people and possible interventions. The most effective method of intervention is to be sure there is consistency among the adults involved in each student's life. If this cannot be accomplished throughout the school, consider it at a grade level or in a wing of the building. Try to identify the "world" in which each student lives.

THE FOUR "R'S" OF BULLY CONTROL

RECOGNIZE THAT A PROBLEM EXISTS. Too often we try to explain away a problem as being an isolated situation, a particular student or even due to a full moon (gotcha, didn't I?). Realize that every school has this problem. Make a list of potential bullies. Have each teacher identify the students they are concerned about in the building or their classroom. This is not to label the student, but to be able to provide successful interventions.

REMOVE YOURSELF. STEP BACK AND EXAMINE YOUR ATTITUDE. Most people do not like the actions of a bully. They feel frustrated by their attitude and upset with their apparent insensitive tactics. As educators, we are no different. Without even realizing it, we can have an attitude toward an individual and it will influence our intervention attempts (been there, done that-it is a mess). Evaluate your attitude. If you find that your frustrations are interfering with working with a student, ask for help from another person.

REVIEW THE SITUATION. Do not assume that the bully is the bully. It may be an act of retaliation or frustration. Get as many facts as possible before giving a consequence or making a judgment. It may be helpful to talk to other adults who know the people involved. Your point of view is just that "your point of view."

RESPOND TO THE SITUATION. Take action. It is important to send a strong message to all involved that there are safety rules and guidelines. Be sure to include your administrator or some other person in authority if your decision will affect the status of the student as a student. Be careful to not make promises you are unable to keep. In other words, do not threaten suspension unless you are in a position to follow through.

BULLY INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Take steps to create a positive environment- Examine the seating arrangement in your classroom. Are you putting people next to each other that will clash or align themselves against others? Is the bully someone who is within a visual view of you?

Establish and enforce classroom rules- Share your rules regularly (as we discussed earlier in this manual). Help the kids know the rules and remember them. Refer to the rules often, even giving a test or quiz on them. Hand out rewards for those who follow rules in stressful times (like yourself 😊). I have been known to give myself a piece of candy in front of the students. When asked why I am eating candy, I respond, "I did not lose my cool when you were all talking without permission, so I get a reward."

Act quickly to intervene- Don't ignore misbehavior that is impacting the classroom environment. If you do not address obvious rule infractions at some point, it will be viewed as permission to not follow instructions. Remember that low level behaviors will quickly escalate if they are not addressed eventually.

Use positive interpersonal skills with all students, even bullies- Be clear in your communication. Don't use phrases that put people in a defensive posture. Be specific in statements. "I want you to behave" could be clearer. "I want you to sit down and read your book" directs the student much better. "I want" or "I expect" are clear. Use eye contact and body language to let them know you are serious.

Examine your own response to bullying incidents- Be sure to be supportive to the victim without being sympathetic. The message needs to be clear "We don't treat people like that in my _____ (classroom, this school, this home, or wherever the setting is)."

Provide students with a way out of conflicts and confrontations- Be sure to give students options. When a person feels trapped, they will lash out. This means they will usually make a bad decision. If you choose to not address an issue immediately, be sure to not overlook it. Find time to deal with it or there will be a repeat episode.

Let students know they are important and worth the effort to help learn new skills- All students need your time. Be careful not to avoid those students that you are frustrated with and pay more attention to those you like. This is an easy trap to fall into.

Empower students to take positive action against bullying- Let all students know that "abuse" in the school is not tolerated. There are laws and rules against verbal, emotional and physical abuse and that extends into the schools.

VICTIM INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Create an open door policy- Be available to the students. Have specific times they can come and see you. Be sure you pay attention when they come to you. It is easy to grade papers, be erasing the board or doing other activities when these students come to you. They may seem like they are whining, but they need your guidance all the same.

Respond to reports of minor incidents- If you have a student that complains about everything, teach them what is important. Give them a framework to follow. Help them understand what is serious, what is minor, what should be handled alone, when do we need assistance.

Take the incident or report seriously- Victims fear being ignored and taken lightly. Don't minimize a person. Even if you don't think it is a big deal or if you are not able to do anything about it, at least validate their emotions and help them know they are important.

Offer concrete help, advice, and support to the victim- What about next time? Strategize with the victim as to ideas next time this happens. If necessary, role-play with them. Use social skills training as a way to prevent further problems. Use the "conflict resolution" worksheet to generate new ideas.

Provide follow-up support for the victim- Check with the victim regularly. Find other support systems for them. Who are their friends? Do they have any friends? Are there others they can use to encourage them and give them ideas? Have them write you a note each week. It is possible to find ways to connect that don't create a co-dependence upon you as the adult.

Examine your own attitudes about the victim- It is not unusual to be frustrated with the victim for taking an apparent passive road. The victim is seen as a complainer, a whiner. Do you feel that the victim "deserves it?" Once again, we must hold up the mirror and look at our own attitudes in life.

Take action with the bully as soon as possible- Follow-up with the bully. Let them know of your disapproval of their tactics. If they have issues, help them find other ways of coping without picking on another student.

****** Think of one person you know (child/adult) that falls into the "victim" category. Name two strategies or approaches that you may use next time you are confronted with this attitude.

1.

2.

DEVELOPING A SCHOOLWIDE PLAN FOR GOSSIP AND CRITICISM

Naturally, awareness of a problem is one of the first ways to reduce the problem. Each teacher should use several of the activities outlined in this manual. It may be helpful for the administration to have an assembly and talk about this issue. Post signs and posters around the school reminding students to say positive words toward one another. Encourage teachers to have parties at the end of each week if their students were able to minimize their put-downs, gossip and criticism. While this is very subjective, it allows for reinforcements at the teacher's discretion.

The use of a "HOORAY" form may be useful within the school setting. These are forms that students may use to encourage one another.

HOORAY FOR _____ (a student's name is placed in here)
BECAUSE _____ (a
reason for their "hooray.")

I make up one form each on a piece of paper. You may decorate it as you wish. When I see a student doing well, helping others, being kind or considerate, I fill one out and put it up on the wall. At the end of the week, I give them to each student. Some have several papers up on the wall.

After modeling this for a few weeks, I then allow the students to give them out to one another. They come to me and request a hooray form. I ask them what it is for and they might say, "Joe helped me carry my books." Or "Keri helped me with my math." Or "Peter let me play softball with him." It doesn't matter what they say as long as it is a positive event. No situation is too trivial. I let them fill it out and place it on the wall. Again, at the end of the week, I give them out.

Yes, the students do abuse the forms. But what a great way to abuse the system. They are purposefully looking for positive things in another person. It helps the class to focus on good things.

An entire school can do this activity. Have a classroom "adopt" another class and give out the HOORAY forms. Ask each student in your class to give out three forms this week to different students. Again, the intent is to have them minimize the complaining, criticism and negative talk. This activity greatly reduces the negative since the students are focused on the positive. This works well as all grade levels.

RESILIENT FOUNDATIONS OF RESILIENT CLASSROOMS

1. **ACADEMIC EFFICACY.** A students' collective belief about what he/she may accomplish is the foundation for success and academic efficacy. These beliefs come from both external and internal sources.

- Classroom Routines That Reinforce Academic Efficacy:
 - a. Students must experience success- too many students enter with a negative, failing mindset. Set up success first.
 - b. Students should be included in academic decision-making- choice in assignments, presentations, and evaluations.
 - c. Effort vs. Trying- measure the effort.
 - d. Self-Monitoring- positive self-talk, personal evaluation.

2. **BEHAVIORAL SELF-CONTROL.** This is not as simple as teaching a set of rules. Each student has internalized preferences, values, and beliefs that impact his/her own standards.

- Classroom Routines That Reinforce Behavioral Self-Control
 - a. Expectations- taught, practiced, reinforced, monitored.
 - b. Use of peer support- use of peers for management, behavior rating, reinforcement.
 - c. Evaluation of material, presentation, and interest level- analyze your style of teaching.

3. **ACADEMIC SELF-DETERMINATION.** Students need personal goals for their learning. It is important for them to understand the relevance and purpose in learning.

- Classroom Routines That Reinforce Academic Self-Determination
 - a. Process vs. product- assessing the micro, not just the macro.
 - b. Meaningfulness- do the students perceive the activities or subject as personally meaningful? Find a way to integrate it into their lives.
 - c. Deeper levels of understanding- ask penetrating, probing questions.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESILIENT CLASSROOMS

1. TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS. When students feel valued, it promotes engagement and confidence in the classroom. Relationships are one of the greatest reinforcements for learning.

- Classroom Routines That Reinforce Relationships:
 - a. Be aware of classroom environment- are students upset, frustrated, overwhelmed?
 - b. Caring comments- how many positive comments occur?
 - c. Sensitive responses- are we too busy to take time?
 - d. Weekly discussions or meetings-classroom meetings.

2. PEER RELATIONSHIPS. Student relationships within the classroom are highly predictive of their academic and social success. Effective peer relationships encourage learning, interest, involvement, and social competence. Resilient classrooms use multiple strategies to enhance classroom relationships.

- Classroom Routines That Reinforce Relationships
 - a. Use of group work- individual vs. group connections.
 - b. Daily routines that involve relationship building- evaluate your routines. Do you promote group relationships?
 - c. Interventions that promote social learning-peer tutoring, cooperative learning, cross-age tutoring.
 - d. Teach pro-social skills- relationship skills, conflict resolution, coping skills.

3. HOME-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS. Patterns and attitudes established at home will carry over into the classroom. When schools and homes are jointly in support of the educational endeavors of the student, there is a greater chance of student success.

- Classroom Routines That Reinforce Home-School Relationships
 - a. Inform parents of home-based support practices- send home articles, share at open house, conferences.
 - b. Home communication strategies- phone calls, emails, letters.
 - c. Convenient ways to include parents- brainstorm ideas.

CHANGING SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT: one student at a time

1. The "rule a month" approach- have your class(es) focus on one rule specifically for the month (or even a week). Some ideas are walking down the hallway quietly, lining up quietly, getting started when the bell rings, no put-downs in class, bringing materials, etc. Have a reward after every few days (or at the end of a week).
2. "Encourage another person" week- have each student choose (or you choose for them), one person to encourage during the week. It would be important to go over some ideas for encouragement (words, actions). Have them report back at the end of the week what happened. If anyone in the class was being encouraged, have the individual give their impressions.
3. The "I was on task" award- at the end of the class period (or end of designated time), ask the students decide if they were on task in class. Naturally, there would need to be a discussion about being on-task, following directions, etc. For those who were on task, give a point to the class. If they achieve so many points, the class can have free time, a party, listen to music, etc. Have individuals keep track of personal points and give additional incentives for achieving certain goals.
4. A "Behavior Code" for students- go beyond your class and get a group of classes together (perhaps the 4th grade students, or upper wing classes, or certain section of the school). Have a meeting with students and have them agree on an area of focus. Once again, set up a reward or reinforcement system at the completion.
5. "Catch'em Being Good" approach- students will be asked to watch for certain behaviors during the week. You may keep the same behaviors or vary each day. When they see a behavior from another student, they will write out the name of the student and turn it into their teacher. A certificate or roll call may be used for names turned in to the teacher.

OTHER IDEAS (write out your own ideas).

FOUNDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING TOTAL SCHOOL DISCIPLINE
SEND TO INSTRUCTOR

1. **TEAMWORK FROM ALL ADULTS-** we need to work together. As adults, we sometimes forget we are on the same team. A savvy administrator will set up school-wide rules that help students know expectations. A "maverick" teacher creates more problems than a rebellious student.
2. **SCHOOL CONTROL BEGINS WITH CLASS CONTROL-** let's go back to the last section. The classroom is critical. If we want school control, we must find a place for classroom control.
3. **A STRONG COMMITMENT TO PROCEDURE-** are you willing to follow the school rules, even if you disagree? I was in a school where gum chewing was not allowed. Unfortunately, there were a couple of teachers who didn't like the rule. They chewed gum and handed out gum as a reward to students. This quickly undermined the authority of all teachers. (I know, I know, Where was the administrator?)
4. **AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL IS BOTH STRONG AND FAIR-** communication among parents and students will allow the "fairness" issue to be a strength.
5. **KNOW WHAT YOU WILL DO NEXT-** if there is a building plan for aggression, violence, abuse, threats, weapons, etc., it will create an environment of confidence among the educators.
6. **DEVELOP EXPECTED BEHAVIORS-** do you have school-wide expectations? How should students walk in the hallway, act in the lunchroom, behave during an assembly? These behaviors must be taught and not assumed.
7. **NOTHING CHANGES IF NOTHING CHANGES-** if there are problems in an area, interventions and teaching must take place. Problems at recess mean rules must be taught, not just consequences for misbehavior.
8. **STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP IMPACTS DISCIPLINE-** as stated before, relationship between people in the building (adults and students) will set the tone of your school.
9. **TOTAL SCHOOL DISCIPLINE IS A PROCESS, NOT A PRODUCT-** it must be taught, every year. It must be taught repeatedly, every year. There must be an organized plan for teaching and training.

Evaluate your school setting. Are there areas that need to be changed to increase the total school discipline? List them below.

WRITE A 1-2 PAGE SUMMARY and SEND to instructor.

Social Skills Interventions

Effective social skills programs are comprised of two essential elements: a teaching process that uses a behavioral/social learning approach and a universal language or set of steps that facilitates the learning of new behavior. Interventions can be implemented at a school-wide, specific setting, classroom, or individual level, but at all levels the emphasis is on teaching the desired skill, not punishing negative behaviors.

Facilitate learning through normal activities. Teachers and parents must take advantage of incidental learning, in which naturally occurring behaviors or events are used to teach and reinforce appropriate social behavior. Adults can reinforce demonstrated positive social skills by praising children when they behave correctly, or offer alternatives to poor decisions to teach the more appropriate behavior. It may be necessary when working with children who have particular difficulty to intentionally "catch" them doing the right thing or devise situations in which they can make a good choice.

Address environmental factors. The school or home environment can affect a child's ability to learn and perform good social skills. If a child is experiencing difficulty demonstrating a particular skill, it is best to first evaluate the environment to determine what might interfere with the child's appropriate acquisition of that skill. For instance, a student may be unruly at the beginning of the day because the teacher needs to establish more specific routines for coming into class, hanging up coats, checking in, etc. Addressing environmental obstacles like this also will benefit all children in that environment.

Address individual factors. Some children need more intensive, personalized training because of individual factors, such as a disability. These interventions might be aimed at children experiencing a specific difficulty or those who have previously been identified as at risk for behavior problems. For example, studies have shown that children with mild disabilities tend to exhibit deficient social skills and excess problem behaviors more than students without such disabilities. Interventions aimed at at-risk students are based on individual assessment of the particular child's skills and deficits. Selected interventions aim to prevent existing behavior problems from developing into more serious ones.

Social skills training should:

- Focus on facilitating the desirable behavior as well as eliminating the undesirable behavior.
- Emphasize the learning, performance, generalization, and maintenance of appropriate behaviors through modeling, coaching, and role-playing. It is also crucial to provide students with immediate performance feedback.
- Employ primarily positive strategies and add punitive strategies only if the positive approach is unsuccessful and the behavior is of a serious and/or dangerous nature.
- Provide training and practice opportunities in a wide range of settings with different groups and individuals in order to encourage students to generalize new skills to multiple, real life situations.
- Draw on assessment strategies, including functional assessments of behavior, to identify those children in need of more intensive interventions as well as target skills for instruction.
- Look to enhance social skills by increasing the frequency of an appropriate behavior in a particular situation. This should take place in "normal" environments to address the naturally occurring causes and consequences.

When planning social skills training programs, schools should:

- Include parents and other caregivers, both to help develop and select interventions and as significant participants in interventions. (Parents and caregivers can help reinforce the skills taught at school to further promote generalization across settings.)
- Focus on all age groups, including children below the age of 9 who are often bypassed due to the erroneous belief that they will "grow out of it."
- Avoid a "one size fits all" approach and adapt the intervention to meet the individual or particular group needs. Students who speak English as a Second Language might need intensive social skill instruction to promote acculturation and peer acceptance. Children with disabilities might need adaptive curriculum and learning strategies. Most children will need a combination of different strategies that are matched to their particular deficits and backgrounds.

DEVELOPING A USER FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

Understand the uniqueness of the child-

Every child is different. Be careful to not lump them all into one intervention or approach. You may need to develop individual approaches.

Explore factors that may fuel the explosive urges-

Examine your environment for potential problems. For example, too much stimulation, lack of rules or boundaries, not enough activities, unclear expectations.

Be flexible, modify requirements if necessary-

Modification of assignments and expectations should be a regular part of your classroom. Though the changes may be temporary, they will help specific children to succeed and buy into your overall plan.

Identify specific problem areas and situations-

When are the most difficult times-transitions, coming in from recess, lunch, passing periods? If the educator can prepare for problems, it will reduce the number of issues.

Recognize warning signs to explosive behaviors-

Make a list of warning signs you see in the classroom or individual students. Talk to other educators for their input.

Adults interpret incoherent behaviors for what they are: incoherent behaviors-

Instead, we need to look beneath the behavior and attempt to understand motivation. What is the purpose and reason for the behavior? And, contrary to common belief, it is not always to "drive us crazy."

Adults understand how they may be part of the cycle or pattern-

Are you a part of the problem? Do we respond the same way and create a cycle or pattern within the setting?

Adults change their language approach with child-

Try something new and different. Get out of your rut. Be more positive with your statements, praise and encourage more often.

Developing a short term and long term vision for behavior change-

Look for small changes in behavior. The "baby steps" lead to success.

(A HELPFUL HANDOUT TO PARENTS)
LESSON PLANS: NINE WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD EXCEL IN SCHOOL
BY Dolly Calhoun Williams

Education does not begin and end at the schoolhouse door. In order for our children to succeed, we parents must take an active part in their education. Here are some strategies that will help your child to do her or his best in school.

****** Instill a strong sense of self-worth in your child. Give your child constant nurturing, guidance and encouragement to build the self-confidence and self-esteem she needs to succeed in school. Do this by acknowledging your child's accomplishments and affirming her talents.

****** Talk with your child and really listen to what he says. Have a daily conversation about events in school. Encourage him to explain new ideas he has learned or other projects he is working on. You can further his interest and enthusiasm by discussing how his new knowledge and skills relate to something he already knows.

****** Find lessons in your daily activities. Your home and daily routine can provide a wealth of opportunities for conversation and learning. Sorting books on a shelf and cooking together can develop matching and math concepts, shopping can boost writing and language skills, and discussing television programs you watch together can encourage critical thinking.

****** Set a good example. Show your child that you value education and that learning is important in your life too. Let reading be an integral part of your family's leisure time. Include your child in home, community or church projects that relate to what he is learning in school. Let him see you take a project, such as planning a block party, from start to finish. This will teach him that he can complete a challenging job if he sticks to it.

****** Get to know your child's teachers, counselors and principal. Let them know that you are paying close attention to your child's school progress. Ask for specific suggestions on what you can do at home with your child to increase learning. Keep your child's teacher abreast of what is going on at home-particularly if there has been a major upset in the child's life such as a death, divorce, move or new sibling. This information will help the teacher understand the child better.

****** Request that your child be put in classes of particular interest. Find out which teachers she especially likes and encourage a relationship of learning between them.

****** Take an active interest in your child's homework. Insist that the television and radio not interfere with her learning. Know what assignments have been given and when they are due. If she continually insists she does not have homework or tests, be sure to check with her teachers or other parents of children in the class.

****** Support special school events. Attending all Open House gatherings, school plays, athletic events, and concerts not only boost the morale of your child but it also encourages the students and shows the staff a support for the school.

****** Volunteer. Your child's school needs you. If you have the time, be a class parent, supervise on field trips, make phone calls for the school, or go to a career day. Help other parents to prepare class parties, special classroom projects or be active in the parent organization.

STUDENTS, CLASSROOM, AND WHOLE-SCHOOL DISCIPLINE BIBLIOGRAPHY

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The following two books are written by your instructor and contain a faith based perspective and biblical references. These are available on line or through bookstores. Both books are available in CD format as audio books.

What To Do When Words Get Ugly. Michael Sedler. Revell Books, 2016 (edited/revised edition). Examines the topic of gossip and how it impacts people. (Adult) www.bakerbooks.com 1-800-877-2665

When to Speak Up and When to Shut Up. Michael Sedler. Revell Books, 2006. Communication book discussing conflict and encouragement. (Adult) www.bakerbooks.com 1-800-877-2665 **(over 300,000 copies sold).**